565 621 423 at a distance of several miles, and managed by Nambudiri Brahmans. In this case a representative Nambudiri patrilineal family might live in the village and play the role of headman. In yet other villages, which probably comprised about half the villages in the kingdom, the land was owned by the matrilineage of a hereditary Nayar village headman (desavari) originally appointed by the king or by the chief of the nad. The Nayar desavaris of a chiefdom collectively formed a subcaste ritually lower than the subcaste of chiefs of their kingdom. In Walluvanad and Calicut the subcaste of village headmen was called Kiriattil Nayar; in Cochin they were called Vellayma Nayars.

565 622 423 The landowning families in all of these types of villages were called janmis. In every case, no matter whether the janmi were of a patrilineal or a matrilineal caste, the eldest man of the extended family had legal guardianship of his own family, and in another sense, of the village lands and the lower caste inhabitants. [16] In addition to his economic rights, the janmi had administrative rights. First, he must sanction marriages of all castes in the village, none of which could be performed without his consent. Second came ambalapadhi or control of ceremonies in the village temple(s); and third urayma or direction of temple lands and servants. [346] (It should be made clear that each village had its public temple apart from the larger temples of the chiefdom and the kingdom.) While headman of the village and a landowner in a certain sense, however, the janmi could not sell away his lands

565 without the direction of the chief. Usually, a
622 janmi family remained in situ over many gener-
423 ations. In addition, the janmi was obliged to lease off on long term tenure a large part of his lands to Nayar retainers and could not retract these without the tenant's consent or without the aid of a public assembly of tenants in case of ill-doing on the part of one of them.

621 Traditional villages are classifiable therefore
631 as 1) Braham; 2) Temple; 3) Royal; 4) Chiefly;
565 5) Nayar headmen's villages. In some areas,
644 a group of villages of the same type might be found adjacent to each other; this was particularly the case with "Brahman" and "Nayar headmen's" villages, where four or five might form a cluster headed by janmis of the same subcaste. [17] In each village, subordinate to the janmi's lineage in ritual rank and administrative power, came the members of one or other subcaste of
[701] Nayar retainers. Nayar retainers, whom I shall also call Military Nayars since most of them were soldiers, were divided into three subcaste: 1) retainers of Nambudiri Brahmans and of temples, called Sudra Nayars in Calicut and Walluvanad and Illath Sudra Nayars in Cochin; 2) retainers of the royal lineage, or "palanquin-bearers," called Pallichans in all three kingdoms; and 3) retainers of the chiefs and the Nayar village headmen, called Charna Nayars in Calicut and Walluvanad and Swaroopattil Sudra Nayars in Cochin. Each of these subcastes
[264] disputed for ritual rank and in everyday circumstances would not interdine with each other. This dispute for rank was possible because they

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itself a separate caste. The Cochin lineage claimed descent from the Perumals and ranked as Kshattriyas, the second of the four divisions of all-India Hindu society. The Walluvanad, Palghat, and Calicut lineages, once vassals of the Perumals, were not strictly recognized as Kshattriyas in Brahmin theory and held the title of Samantans. Normally, the oldest man in each royal lineage held the kingship and administered customary law with assistance from Brahman advisers.

Each kingdom was divided into *nāds* (chiefdoms or districts). In the Zamorin's kingdom at the height of its power some of these chiefdoms had once been independent small kingdoms. They were conquered by Calicut in the late fourteenth and the fifteenth centuries. They continued to be ruled by their traditional monarchs, who paid tribute to Calicut. Among them were the chiefdoms of Beypore, Chaliyam, Parappanad, Bettem, and Punnattur. Each of these ruling lineages, although feudatory, retained a higher ritual rank than the Zamorin by virtue of its more ancient tradition of government. Similarly, some chiefdoms of the Cochin kingdom were governed by conquered feudatory rulers of higher ritual rank than the royal lineage. The small kingdoms of Walluvanad and Palghat, however, had no feudatories of higher rank than their royal lineages.

The other chiefdoms of a kingdom were ruled by hereditary Nayar chiefs (*nāduvaḷs*) originally appointed by the king, and these chiefs had more restricted powers than the feudatory monarchs. Most of them held the title of Samantan, but all were considered of lower ritual rank than their royal lineages. The Zamorin's kingdom (the largest) appears to have had twenty-eight such district chiefs in the fifteenth century. Each chiefly lineage, like each royal lineage, tended to regard itself as a separate caste acknowledging no peers.

Each chiefdom was divided into *dēśams* or villages. A village seems to have covered anything from one to four square miles, comprising both dry garden land and flats of alluvial rice land. Most of the land in each village was normally owned by one landlord family of higher ritual rank than the other occupants.

In some villages the land was owned by a Nambudiri patrilineal extended family, whose large house occupied a central position. In others it was owned by one or other branch of the royal lineage as part of the royal domain. There would then be a palace in the village and the senior prince of the household would act as village headman. In other villages the land was owned by the chiefly matrilineage of the district, whether this lineage were of feudatory royal rank or of vassal Samantan rank. Again in this case the chiefly family would live

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621 in a small palace and the head of it would fulfil the roles both of
564 chief and of village headman. In other villages the land formed part
471 of the estate of some large temple. These estates, called *sankētams*,
613 were managed by assemblies of Nambudiris who held complete judi-
[622] cial rights over the lower-caste population. Finally, in yet other vil-
lages the land was owned by the matrilineage of a hereditary Nayar village headman (*dēsavari*) originally appointed by the king or by the chief of the district. The Nayar village headmen were drawn from castes ritually lower than those of their district chiefs. In Walluvaned and Calicut village headmen were usually drawn from the Kiriattil Nayar caste. The corresponding caste in Cochin was called Vellayma Nayars.

The landowning families in all of these villages were called *jenmis*. The eldest man of the extended family, whether patrilineal or matrilineal, had legal guardianship of his own family and, in another sense, of the village lands and inhabitants. He sanctioned marriages in all the castes, managed the land devoted to village temples, and paid the temple servants from its produce. A landlord family could not sell its land without the consent of the king and it usually remained on its site over many generations.

621 Villages were classifiable therefore as Brahman, temple, royal,
564 chiefly, and Nayar headmen's villages. In some areas a group of villages of the same type might be adjacent to one another. In each village, subordinate to the landlord in ritual rank and administrative
[178] power, lived members of one or other caste of Nayar retainers or vassals. In modern times these castes have tended to combine as a single caste of "high-class Nayars," so that their former roles are difficult to determine. So far as I could discover they were as follows.

564 First, a caste called Kiriattil Nayars in Calicut and Vellayma Nayars
[622] in Cochin. Most village headmen's lineages were originally drawn
[613] from this caste, but after they had assumed office these lineages isolated themselves as a separate sub-caste of higher rank than ordinary Kiriattils. Ordinary Kiriattils appear to have been usually retainers in villages commanded by Nayar village headmen.

Second, a caste called Purattu Charna Nayars ("outdoor retainers") in Calicut. Its members usually lived in villages owned by a district
[701] chief or by the royal lineage. A special, higher-ranking subdivision of the caste called Pariccha Menons ("leaders of the shield") formed the Zamorin's private army and lived on royal land near Calicut.

Third, a caste called Agattu Charna Nayars ("indoor retainers") in Calicut. They also seem to have lived mainly in royal or chiefly vil-

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or *kara-yōgam* (Logan, 1951, I: 87–88, 132–133). The functions of intra-caste administration of the Nayar assembly are discussed later in connection with the lineage.

The village headman, assisted by representatives from the Nayar retainers, judged small civil cases concerning debt, petty theft, or trespass. He appropriated the fines in these cases (Munro, quoted in Ayyar, 1938: 288). Individual Nayars also arbitrated in small civil disputes carried voluntarily to them by disputants within their own or the lower castes. Serfs came directly under the jurisdiction of their Nayar or Brahman masters, who had the power of life and death over them.

In the castes above the serfs, larger civil disputes and grave crimes were judged in the court of either chief or king. Chiefs' (*nāduvaris'*) judicial powers varied with the size of their armies, but feudatory princes (*svarūpis*) retained complete judicial rights with power over life and death (Ayyar, 1938: 272). So also did the Brahman managers of temple estates, although they called upon some local chief to carry out their judgments. Murder, sacrilege, treason, the wounding of a cow or of a Brahman, indecent assault of a woman, and grave theft from a man of "good" caste were generally punishable by death (*ibid.*: 282). Brahmans and women, however, were never officially executed by order of the king. All offenses among Brahmans were tried by an assembly of the Brahman neighborhood, which, with the local ruler's approval, might excommunicate the offender. If a woman of any caste above serfs was convicted of a capital offense the king had the right to sell her into slavery.

The higher the cast, the wider the field of social relations. Among the serfs and the higher polluting castes this was confined to a group of adjacent villages. Among temple servants, village headmen, and retainer Nayars (apart from their excursions in war) the field of social relations was the chiefdom. Among chiefs and royalty it was the kingdom, and among Brahmans, Kerala.

Hypergamy in the Upper Castes

Each of the castes below Nayar temple menials was endogamous, as is usual in the caste system throughout India. But among the higher "clean" castes the integration of political offices and of the larger territorial units was strengthened by hypergamous marriages. By hypergamy I mean the marriage of a woman of lower caste to a man of higher caste.

In discussing hypergamy it is necessary to explain the descent

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Each Nayar chiefly lineage, like royalty, normally counted itself a separate caste and married only hypergamously. Women of chiefly lineages married the royals or feudatory royals to whom their lineages were immediately subordinate, or wealthy Nambudiris, usually of their own district. Men of chiefly lineages married women of village headmen's lineages within their district, or women of retainer Nayar lineages, usually in their own villages.

Village headmen's lineages occasionally contracted marriages reciprocally with other village headmen's lineages of the chiefdom which had originally sprung from the same retainer caste. They also provided wives for chiefs and Brahmans and husbands for retainer women, usually of their own villages. [622]

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Among temple servants, Nayar retainers, and Nayar temple menials the majority of marriages were between persons of the same caste. A few women in the Psharodi, Variyar, Poduval, and Nambyar castes married Nambudiris, especially those whose families managed the temples where they worked. A few such women also married men of the Chakkyar and Pushpagan castes, which had descent systems like that of the Nambudiris. A few men of these matrilineal temple-servant castes married women of Nayar retainer and Nayar temple-menial castes in the villages of their work. Nayar women were particularly convenient partners for temple servants and Nambudiri temple priests because of the latters' spatial distribution. Often a temple-servant lineage or a Brahman priestly family held the hereditary right of service in six or eight small temples in villages up to ten miles away. One man of the lineage might spend much of his life working away from home in one of the more distant temples. He would live on food previously offered to the deity, occupy a room attached to the temple kitchen, bathe in the temple bathing pool, and visit a local Nayar wife at nights, returning home for life crises and festivals.

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Women of the retainer Nayar castes might receive husbands from all the castes above them. Sudra Nayar women living in Brahman-owned villages or on the estates of large temples were the most likely to form links with Brahmans and temple servants; Charna Nayars and Pallichans, with royalty or chiefs; and Kiriattil women, with village headmen. Thus hypergamous unions entered into by retainer Nayars in general followed the main lines of lord-vassal relationships. However, "odd" marriages with individuals of any higher rank in nearby villages were permitted.

Because the higher castes were much smaller than they were, the Nayar retainers probably gave less than 10 per cent of their women

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the lineage they were legally mandatory. The local caste assembly, with the backing of royal or chiefly authority, could take action against offenders. Intra-lineage incest was indeed a crime punishable by death. As a matter of courtesy, lineage members extended appropriate kinship terms to one another.

Unless it was declining in numbers and had shrunk to the proportions of a single household, the lineage was not an economic unit. Its members did not jointly own an estate and did not coöperate in the production or distribution of goods. These functions accrued to the small segment of a lineage occupying a single homestead, which I call a property group. Lineage kin *were* the residual heirs of a property group which died out. However, such reversion of property was rare. A property group which had no childbearing women usually adopted one or more girls from some other branch of the lineage in order to perpetuate itself.

A "commoner" lineage had no headman. Its oldest man commanded special respect but he had no legal authority over the lineage as a whole. The office of headman of the lineage existed only in village headmen's, chiefly, and royal lineages. Here the political office was theoretically vested in the eldest man of the lineage, irrespective of branch. These lineages had a somewhat different structure, discussed below.

The members of a lineage engaged in coöperative activities at two major life crises: the pre-puberty marriage rite of girls, and the funeral of a member, followed by offerings to the departed spirit on the fifteenth and sixteenth days after the death.

Both of these occasions involved the caste assembly of the neighborhood and the institution of linked lineages or *enangar*. The caste assembly comprised the eldest men (*kāranavar*) of all the property groups. It met periodically on a mound (tara) near the Bhagavadi temple of the neighborhood to manage the temple's affairs. It also judged offenses against the religious laws of the caste.

Each lineage was linked by hereditary ties of ceremonial coöperation to two or three other lineages of the neighborhood. These linkages were reciprocal but not exclusive. For example, lineage A might have as enangar B, C, and D, whereas B might have A, E, and F, and so on. A chain of such relationships therefore linked all lineages of the neighborhood.

The enangar were partners who offered help in a ceremonial manner at all major life crises. They stood as formal links between the lineage and the total neighborhood group, which was called the *enangu*. In

634 613 635 622 726 succession to district chiefship and to village headships had to be ratified by the king and he could if necessary dispossess disaffected branches and exclude them from office. This was true in the heart of the kingdom. Between Calicut and Cochin, the Zamorins' perpetual enemy, lay several small chiefdoms ruled by formerly independent Kshattriya lineages owing only a tenuous allegiance to one or the other side. In the perennial wars between Calicut and Cochin disaffected branches of these lineages frequently changed sides.

622 635 634 613 Village headmen's lineages, again, had their successions confirmed by the chief or king to whom they owed immediate allegiance. When a property group divided into segments, the tendency seems to have been for the branch having the senior member to retain the ancestral house, the office, and most of the village domain. The king or chief sometimes installed a discarded branch of such a lineage in a vacant office elsewhere, if the office-bearing lineage of that village had died out. His power to do this rested on the fact that an office-bearing lineage which was dying out could not adopt without the consent of the officer of next higher rank. Lopped branches of village headmen's lineages which lost their domains and office seem to have reverted in time to the caste rank of retainer Nayars.

613 554 In most of the royal lineages and many of the chiefly lineages there existed the institution of *sthānams*. These were titles carrying separate estates and sometimes subordinate political offices for the men next in seniority to the ruler, irrespective of branch. The Zamorin's lineage had five sthānams. The first was the Zamorin who had palaces at Calicut and Ponnani. Second came a *sthāni* (title holder) who ruled as chief of Nedunganad, a large chiefdom near the southern boundary whose former ruler had been conquered and executed. The third sthāni regularly patrolled the southern frontier with an army. The fourth and fifth had no political offices but lived on separate estates. The rest of the lineage occupied one or more palaces in Calicut. When a sthāni died, those next below him in age rank all moved up one place. The ruling lineages of Kolattunad, Walluvanad, and Palghat each had five sthānis and many of the lesser chiefs had two or three. Cochin had no sthānis other than the king, but originally the eldest male of the lineage retired into celibacy while the second ruled as [648] king. When the Portuguese came they abolished this rule and installed the king themselves.

[182] When a ruling lineage was financially and militarily strong, sthānams strengthened its rule and helped it to cohere for a longer time than it might otherwise have done. They lifted the senior men out of their

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separate segments, gave them economic independence and a share in the government, and made them representatives of the lineage as a whole. If the lineage separated into two or more branch property groups, their estates were managed by their senior men after the sthānis had been removed. The whole lineage might thus cohere for a number of generations. When, however, taxes ran low and the political offices became financially weak, the sthānis had a tendency to revert to the property groups from which they came and, as heads of them, to seek independent rule over a portion of the chiefdom or kingdom. Sthānams were thus an integrative device which developed when a ruling lineage was already strong. They could not maintain its strength if the economic basis of its power was removed, nor could they ultimately prevent disputes of the branches for the central office if the lineage became very large.

RELATIONS BETWEEN ARISTOCRATIC LINEAGES

Each office-bearing lineage had as its enangar one or two higher-ranking lineages from the range of those within which its women were wont to draw visiting husbands. Thus village headmen often had their district chiefs as enangar. A district chief's lineage might have the royal lineage, a conquered royal lineage, or a Nambudiri Brahman family as enangar. The Calicut royal lineage had two conquered royal feudatory lineages as enangar, and some other royal lineages had Nambudiri Brahman families. The enangar fulfilled the usual ceremonial obligations at life-crisis rites, and tied the tālis of girls. Unlike those among the retainer Nayars, these enangar obligations were not reciprocal. A district chief's lineage might thus receive enangar services from royals, but would give them to village headmen. Appropriately, the enangar relationship among aristocrats, like the marriage relationship, was thus asymmetrical. Unfortunately I lack information about whether aristocratic enangar, like those of retainers, had the right to bring to trial offenders against the religious laws of caste.

It is clear that hypergamous marriages and asymmetrical enangar relations were adapted to the potential political and ritual mobility of office-bearing lineages and to the fact that at any given time such a lineage might not be able or willing to acknowledge others as its equals in political or ritual rank. In most situations therefore an office-bearing lineage could act as though it formed a separate caste. There were some contexts, however, in which this was not possible. One of these was adoption. If a lineage was obliged to adopt, it had to find some other lineage whose members it was willing to acknowledge as peers. This problem was usually surmounted by adopting from a lin-

3:Gough E-4, 5 (1947-1949)1961 AWll Kerala AWll
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marks that "When a high-caste Nayar becomes ripe, he turns into a king."

Low productivity and poor communications perhaps made the exaction of tribute more difficult than in Central Kerala, and this fact, plus the uncertain nature of trade, made the local rulers perennially short of funds. This is probably the reason why, although they were trained for warfare in gymnasia in their villages, Nayars were not regularly conscripted into a national army. Instead, they merely fought sporadically on behalf of local chiefs. Further, chiefs and village headmen were insufficiently strong to bring all the land under their control. Their domains were larger than those of Nayar commoners, but most commoner Nayar property groups were independent small landlords in their own right within their villages. Since they were not full-time warriors and since in many areas they had no serfs, Nayar commoners also did part of their own cultivation on their small estates. Part of their land, however, they leased to Tiyyar tenants as in Central Kerala. The polluting castes of village servants had the same rights and spatial distribution as in Central Kerala. In general, the economic processes of reciprocity and redistribution in villages proceeded in a comparable manner.

As independent warrior-cultivators, the Nayar commoners were not divided into separate castes of retainers owing allegiance as vassals and *kānam* tenants to different kinds of lords. Most villages were nominally under Nayar village headmen. In villages of the Kottayam and Kadattunad kingdoms, both the headman's lineage and those of the Nayar commoners belonged to a large caste called Nambiars, who appear to have intermarried throughout the kingdom. Although of the same general caste as commoners, and not forbidden by religious law from intermarrying equally with commoners, Nambiar village headmen's lineages tended, however, to intermarry only with each other or to take wives only from the commoners, occasionally giving their own women in marriage to chiefs or Brahmans. Chiefs claimed a higher caste rank as Samantan Nambiars, and royalty as Kshattriyas. These aristocratic lineages conducted hypergamous marriages with each other and with Nambudiris as in Central Kerela.

Judicial processes were somewhat less centralized than in the Central kingdoms. At least in theory, grave crimes and civil disputes in urban centers seem to have been tried in royal courts, but most civil disputes inland were apparently tried by local chiefs. Under the chiefs, caste assemblies of neighborhoods took care of crimes against religious law as in the Central kingdoms. Murder among Nayars

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/Information on the Desa Vazhis, the "lord of the manor" and his role as military preceptor in the village community, will be found in category 631./

8:Panikkar I-4, 5 (no date) 1918 AWII Kerala AWII Nayar

unless he has been admitted by certain formalities to the village to which he has emigrated, is considered to belong to his original home.

The village is divided into two *Karas* (or *Amsams*), the northern *Kara* and the southern *Kara*. The division is arbitrary and has no significance. A man from Kavalam belonging to the North or South *Kara* is treated in another village as belonging to the same place.

The *Bhagavati* (goddess) Temple in the village was, before the government took possession of it, owned by *two Karas jointly*.

In each of the *Karas* there are five *Āsāns* or *Pramanis*. They keep *Kalaris* and are honoured and respected by all the Nāyars in the district. No common Nāyar is allowed to sit in their presence, to enter their kitchen, or to call their women without the title of *Kunjamma* (or Ladyship).

The seventy-five families which the *Kara* contains are divided between the five *Āsāns*. Each *Āsān*, therefore, has a general authority over all the families, and special rights over the fifteen families immediately under his control.

In all matters of ceremony the *Āsāns* have to be informed beforehand. Without their presence, no public ceremony of any family is supposed to be valid. All the public functions of the village are done by them. The ceremonies of the temple, for example, are under their control. They are the people who summon the *Karakkars*, or the villagers, to assemble and settle matters of importance. The villagers settle in such assemblies, things relating to the community, such as public festivals, the expenditure of *Karayogam* (common to the village) funds and the behaviour of people who have acted against the customs of the village. If a marriage ceremony had not been properly conducted, it comes before them. If an *Āsān* had not been properly invited, that matter also comes up for consideration. Instances of punishments inflicted by the village on individuals and families were not uncommon till lately. I remember a particular case in which the villagers as a body led by their *Āsān* walked out of the marriage (*Talikettu*) *pandal* because the order of precedence was not kept up. The family of a squire had, during these hard days, become poor, and a rich squire who, in order of precedence, came below him was given a seat of honour. The result was that the whole community walked out as a protest, and the *Kalyanam* had to be held over again to the satisfaction of the poor *Āsān* and his loyal friends.

How strong this organisation is will be seen from the following incident. A gentleman, when coming from Madras, had a Christian friend with him, and his servant who waited for him at Alleppey was eating his food when both of them entered the boat. It is a very rigid custom that no food can be taken in the company, or even in the proximity of any lower caste, and Christians are considered to be such. The result of it was that when they got home the news got abroad that the Nāyar servant had eaten with a Christian in the boat, and the whole village

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by the Kaniyán or local astrologer, to the bridegroom who with the sword on his lap ties it round the neck of the girl. She is then required to hold an arrow and a looking glass. When several girls have to undergo the ceremony, a single Thirumulpád performs it or as many Thirumulpads as there are girls. The Thirumulpad gets one to eight rupees for each girl. As soon as the *tâli* tying is over, certain formalities indicative of the wife's duties (giving the bridegroom betel to chew, giving him a vessel of water to wash his feet and some fruits to eat, etc.), are gone through, and after this, the *tâli* tier is allowed to depart receiving his fee for the service rendered by him. The account given above is that of the ceremony performed in the aristocratic families of the State. Among the Nayars in the northern parts of the State as well as in other places, the Kaniyan or the village astrologer examines the horoscope or horoscopes of the girl or girls and those of the boys of the families of their *enangans*, selects the boy or boys fit to tie the *tâli* and determines the auspicious hour, when information is also given to the *kâranavan* of the boy's families regarding the proposal and a formal request to them to allow the boys to serve as bridegrooms. In the event of their willingness, preparation for the ceremony begins at once. The rites and the order in which they are performed differ in different places, and in different subdivisions of the same caste, but the general characteristics are the same throughout. In well-to-do families there is a *tâli* tier for each girl, while in others, a young man is invited to tie the conjugal collar for one girl, and for others, the mother does it. The beating of drums, firing of pop-guns, the procession with elephant, and the worship of the Sun by the girl on a raised platform are all dispensed with. The other formalities except the *Brâhmani's* song in some places are the same as those described above. Added to the jollity of the occasion are the vociferous and joyous shouting of the parties of men arranged for the purpose, as also a peculiar sound produced by the women assembled there.

The married couple are taken inside the house, and the ceremony is practically over. The *Karayinmêl Asân*, the headman of the village, plays an important part in the ceremony. In a conspicuous part of the pandal he is provided with a seat on a cot, on which are spread, a grass mat, a black blanket and

9:Iyer E-4, 5 (ca. 1902-1906)1912
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588 a white cloth, one over the other. His permission is solicited
622 for the performance of the ceremony, and, with his consent,
[465] the *tâli* is tied. He is paid four, eight, sixteen, thirty-two or sixty-four *puthans* (one *puthan* is equal to ten pies), according to the means of the family. He also gets some curry stuffs, betel
588 leaves, arecanuts and tobacco. There is also at the time a
574 grand distribution of *pân supâri*, scented sandal paste, jasmine
[431] flowers to the women of the village and to the wives of the relatives assembled there. Then follows the feast to the guests assembled there, for which certain formalities are observed, with regard to the seats arranged for them; any violation of the social etiquette will result in the guests abruptly leaving the dining hall without partaking of any food. The women of the family and their relatives are first served. The women of the sub-caste as well as those of the village return home after chewing betel. The men of the same sub-castes and others are
[564] next served, then others lower in status to them, and lastly come in for their share the village barber and washerman. Provision is sometimes made to feed the members of the very low castes. In the meanwhile, what is known as *Pukarchu* (cooked rice, curries, sweets, etc., for the feasts) is sent to the families of relations. It must be said that the various
[262] preparations of the feast are boiled rice, vegetable curries, *pâyasam* (rice boiled in milk) and butter milk, and the grandness of the feast is judged by the quantity of rice prepared for consumption, and other preparations are in proportion to it. The first day's ceremony and the feast thus come to an end. The ceremony however lasts for the next three days, but there is nothing of importance on the second and the third days, except some dancing and music by maidens inside the *pandal*. In some places, on the third day, the caste-men of the village are treated to a luncheon of rice and milk pudding and to varieties of amusements, such as the *Kathakali* and other performances.

588 On the fourth day, the caste-men are again invited. The
[564] married couple bathe in the neighbouring tank or river holding each other's hand, and are taken in procession to worship the deity in the village temple amidst the beating of tom-toms and merry shouts, after which the party return home. The bridegroom and the bride are taken to the kitchen, which they are
[586] prohibited from entering during the first three days, and there they dine together. After this, they proceed to the pandal where

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553 were conferred upon the people. These were, in brief, the rights and privileges[1] of the feudal chieftains of old.

621 **Village organisation and village life.** The question regarding the existence in ancient times of a village organisation in the Cochin State, as in Malabar, is somewhat unsettled. Some are of opinion that the village communities of the east coast have no counterpart in the west, and that there were no regular villages; while others state that the organisation of the country for agrarian, civil, social, and administrative purposes was the ordinary type closely allied to the Tamil nationalities, the cradle of its races, languages, and institutions: and that it rested on the village system in its truest and simplest form. The earliest social organisation was apparently based upon the family group into which the various tribes or castes divided themselves, each with its more or less well defined territorial limits. The Brahmans were grouped in *grámams* and the Nayars in *thards* or *chéris*. The old territorial unit was a *désam* presided over by *Désavázhi* or *Jenmidar*, and a number of *désams* constituted a *nád* ruled over by a *Náduvazhi* or local chieftain who was subject to the Raja. 622 The rights and privileges of the *Désavázhi* were: (1) the direction of the religious ceremonies of the village pagodas, (2) the management of the village pagoda lands and servants, (3) the control of marriages and other ceremonies in the village, and (4) the superintendence of all offences of the *désam* or village. He had besides the civil direction of the religious and military affairs of the villages. The same head-man was a *Désavázhi* or *Jenmi* according as he exercised all or only the first two functions in the village. The *Náduvázhi* was the military chief of his *nád* who was bound to attend the Raja and to march wherever he was directed with all the fighting men of his territory under the control of *Désavázhis* of their respective villages. In time of peace he collected the ordinary and extra revenue, and was helped by one or two accountants. Thus an old typical village was one which consisted of the houses of the military class of Nayars and of those of other low castes, the members of which, like the medieval guilds, were bound together by the ties of common interests, rendering to one another reciprocal services for a share of the village produce, and for the protection which they enjoyed. The village in

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1. Malabar and Its Folk, pages 108-127.

13:Thurston & Rangachari E-4, 5 (no date) 1909
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form of a contest between the bridegroom and the bride's relatives, and which are symbolic survivals of marriage by capture. The Manavālan and the girl next partake of food together in the inner pandal—a proceeding which obviously corresponds to the ceremonious first meal of a newly-married couple. The assembled guests are lavishly entertained. The chief Kovilagans and big Nāyar houses will feed 1,000 Brāhmans as well as their own relations, and spend anything up to ten or fifteen thousand rupees on the ceremony."

Concerning the tāli-kettu ceremony in Travancore Mr. N. Subramani Aiyar writes as follows. "After the age of eleven, a Nāyar girl becomes too old for this ceremony, though, in some rare instances, it is celebrated after a girl attains her age. As among other castes, ages represented by an odd number, *e.g.*, seven, nine, and eleven, have a peculiar auspiciousness attached to them. Any number of girls, even up to a dozen, may go through the ceremony at one time, and they may include infants under one year—an arrangement prompted by considerations of economy, and rendered possible by the fact that no civil or religious right or liability is contracted as between the parties. The duty of getting the girls of the tarwad 'married' devolves on the karanavan, or in his default on the eldest brother, the father's obligation being discharged by informing him that the time for the ceremony has arrived. The masters of the ceremonies at a Nāyar tāli-kettu in Travancore are called Machchampikkar, *i.e.*, men in the village, whose social status is equal to that of the tarwad in which the ceremony is to be celebrated. At a preliminary meeting of the Machchampikkar, the number of girls for whom the ceremony is to be performed, the bridegrooms, and other details are settled. The horoscopes are examined by the village

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stool in the pandal. A male member of the family, generally a brother or maternal uncle of the girl, washes the feet of the bridegroom. The girls are covered with new cloths of cotton or silk, and brought into the pandal, and seated screened off from one another. After the distribution of money presents to the Brāhmans and the Elayad, the latter hands over the tāli, or thin plate of gold shaped like the leaf of aswatha (*Ficus religiosa*), and tacked on to a string, to the Tirumulpād, who ties it round the neck of the girl. A single Tirumulpād often ties the tāli round the neck of two, three, or four girls. He is given one to eight rupees per girl for so doing. Sometimes the tāli is tied by the mother of the girl. The retention of the tāli is not at all obligatory, nay it is seldom worn or taken care of after the ceremony. These circumstances clearly show the purely ceremonial character of this form of marriage. The Karamel Asan, or headman of the village, is an important factor on this occasion. In a conspicuous part of the marriage pandal he is provided with a seat on a cot, on which a grass mat, a black blanket, and white cloth are spread one over the other. Before the tāli is tied, his permission is solicited for the performance of the ceremony. He is paid 4, 8, 16, 32 or 64 puthans (a puthan = 10 pies) per girl, according to the means of the family. He is also given rice, curry stuff, and pān-supāri. Rose-water is sprinkled at intervals on the males and females assembled on the occasion. With the distribution of pān-supāri, scented sandal paste and jasmine flowers to the females of the village and wives of relatives and friends, who are invited for the occasion, these guests return to their homes. The male members, one or two from each family in the village, are then treated to a sumptuous feast. In some places, where the Enangu

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31: Slater S-5 (1916-1917) 1918 AWI India
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the brother or son, in the case of a Nayar the sister's son succeeds. 428
The Travancore and Cochin royal families and the Zamorin family descend in the female line.

Water-supply.—Drinking water is supplied by the wells. Every 312
house has one. The sinking of wells is easy here since the soil is loose and there is no rock and the height above the sea level is not much. Wealthy people build the well with granite, others leave it with mud banks. The labourers dig their wells themselves as it involves only two days' work. The wells never dry up. There are three public wells and two temple wells besides. Indeed the scarcity of water is not felt at all. But for bathing purposes the water in the tank is bad, and some people use well-water for the same. The quality of the well-water is fairly good.

Education.—There are seven schools of which one is a secondary 871
school managed by the Taluk Board, one is a Government Girls' School and the other five are elementary schools, one being Muhammadan. There are 680 boys and 185 girls in attendance.

The education imparted is fairly satisfactory, special stress being laid onthe vernacular. According to the educational curriculum prescribed by the Director, the geography of the district, a little Indian History, a good training in the vernacular, a little Arithmetic, and the beginning of English by teaching the alphabet and small words, are all taught in the school.

Eighty per cent of the men and fifteen per cent of the women [212]
can read and write the vernacular; about two per cent can read [191]
and write English, and somewhat fewer speak it.

Forty boys have left the village and had a college course, and there is one girl matriculate.

About 20 boys after undergoing a little commercial training at Calicut have gone to Bombay and other commercial centres for employment.

It may here be mentioned that emigration to Ceylon is frequent. 167
Emigrants return after three or four years, and remain in the village for one year, and again go to Ceylon. Nearly 150 have gone within recent years.

The only library in the village is the secondary school library 217
which contains nearly 200 books, all juvenile. Five or six private 517
persons possess some books. Some are lawyers and their books are connected with law. Others have only novels. Nobody takes study seriously. Nobody is interested in Science as a subject. This lack of enthusiasm for knowledge makes the Indian less original and less artistic. I know nobody in my village who has designed new arts or invented anything at all. This lack is everywhere visible in India and seen even among students who do not care to know anything more than those things which are prescribed for the examination. This fundamental weakness must be shamefully confessed, but there are signs of change in the right direction.

Village administration.—The head of the village is the *adhigari* 622
or the village munsif. He is the representative of the King-Emperor. He collects the revenue, looks after the affairs of the village, has the jurisdiction over minor civil and criminal cases, controls the roads, Government lands and trees and other public places—in fact he represents every function, in a greater or lesser degree, of the King-Emperor, and is the guardian of the public peace. He must

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622 initiate everything for the village, but the final sanction of his proposals rests with the Collector.

631 Above the village munsif is the Revenue Inspector who looks after the work of four or five village headmen. He has revenue functions only. For other purposes the Magistrate is the immediate superior of the *adhigari*. Next comes the Tahsildar, then the Sub-Collector, then the Collector.

692 Criminal cases are tried by the Magistrate. The Civil and Criminal Courts are situated in the village itself.

A story is told in the village that a poor agricultural man was asked by another, when the Collector had come to the village in one of his tours, whether the Collector or the *adhigari* was the superior officer. He replied, "I don't know, but the *adhigari* is richer, since he receives money yearly from us." The adhigari's *pay* is only Rs. 7 per mensem.*

The jurisdiction of the adhigari with regard to the criminal cases lies only in cases of petty thefts and nuisances, and in civil matters when the amount under dispute does not exceed Rs. 50.

Panchayat.—There is a judicial panchayat for civil cases in which the amount under dispute does not exceed Rs. 50, or Rs. 200 if both the parties agree. This was introduced three years ago as a tentative measure, but it has proved a success in spite of its drawbacks. The jurisdiction of the panchayat courts extends to four or five villages; and the personnel of the court is a non-official president nominated by the Government and the adhigaris of the villages. Nearly 500 civil suits of a minor character were tried last year. The introduction of this system in small cases has caused enormous saving to the parties since the expenditure is small. There is no necessity for a stamped paper, etc. This institution is an advance in the right direction, but the personnel needs change, since they are all the Government representatives and consequently the people have no part to play in the constitution of the court.

364 There is no administration of sanitation. It is left to take care of itself. In theory there is a rule that the roads must be swept once a day and some coolies are appointed for the purpose, but the work is practically neglected on account of lack of supervision.

625 There is a Sub-Inspector of Police and under him a head constable and constables. The people can easily get the help of the police.

691 A large percentage of population is engaged in litigation. There are three reasons:—(1) The Muhammadans are addicted to litigation with regard to the partition of their property. In fact no partition takes place without having recourse to courts. (2) The peculiarity of land tenure has been already described. (3) The indebtedness of the poor and their inability to pay. The result is the majority of the population are litigants.

627 Sometimes compromises are arranged by a gentleman in whom both the parties have faith. There is no compromise committee for the purpose, but the people fearing the expenses of the law courts sometimes settle matters among themselves by means of a third person. Such cases are rare.

[* The point of this story is that, in the Madras Presidency the Collector is the chief District officer. The Collector of Malabar, for example, rules over a population of close on three million people, subject to the Government in Madras.—Ed.]